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BEAT THE DEVIL.

Turkish Delight

One of the richest delights of recent times was the opening day of the show trial in Rome, designed to implicate Bulgaria and the Soviet Union in the attempt to kill the Pope. Mehmet Ali Agca said something even Claire Sterling could not claim to have confirmed independently. He said he was Jesus Christ, and in case anyone missed the point, he said it again the following day, along with other ravings about the three secrets of Fátima. In Western discourse these days, the statement that you are God is among the few, if not the only, remarks taken as de facto evidence of lunacy.

The New York Times, whose sponsorship of Sterling has helped it become one of the prime salesmen for the K.G.B. plot to assassinate the Pope scenario, did its best to break gently to its readers the tidings that the only witness to the famous connection is a lunatic. John Tagliabue, a member of *The Times*'s team at the trial, noted Agca's claim to divinity in his second paragraph but hastened to stress in his third that Agca had given a "measured" explication of pre-assassination chronology. There are hundreds of examples of Agca's abnormal relationship to reality, most of them ignored by the Western press, and it will be interesting to see whether his claim to divinity will also be quietly forgotten amid dutiful phrases about his 'uncanny memory for detail," "convincing testimony" and the like.

Such are the workings of cognitive dissonance that Sterling and the others will no doubt take Agca's statements as fresh and convincing evidence of the master hand of the K.G.B. Why else would Agca, a devout Moslem, identify himself with the Judeo-Christian God unless the K.G.B. had planned for him to say he was God, thereby discrediting himself and by implication the Pope, too?

Since we may reasonably assume that the trial will not produce much in the way of truth, anyone wanting an excellent dissection of the K.G.B./Bulgarian fantasy and the concoction of the plot as black propaganda by Western intelligence agencies should get *Covert Action Information Bulletin #23*. The entire issue, written by Frank Brodhead, Howard Friel and Edward Herman, is devoted to the affair. If you can't find a copy—it came out this spring—write to C.A.I.B., Box 50272, Washington, DC 20004. Just out in France is *La Filiere*, by Christian Roulette, which asserts that the assassination attempt was entirely a Turkish, fascist affair. Sterling, who is attacked in the book, has threatened to sue. It will be interesting to see if she dares go beyond her normal bluster and takes the Frenchman to court. Free Antonov, prisoner of conscience, now!

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